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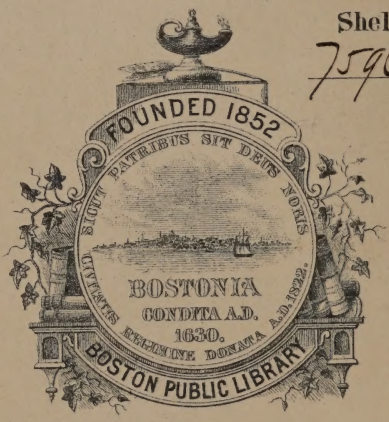

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KINDERGARTEN

AND

PRIMARY SCHOOL

FOR

THE BLIND.

A SECOND APPEAL FOR ITS FOUNDATION AND ENDOWMENT.

By M. ANAGNOS.

[The perusal of the following pages is most earnestly solicited.]

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FRANKLIN PRESS: RAND, AVERY, & CO.
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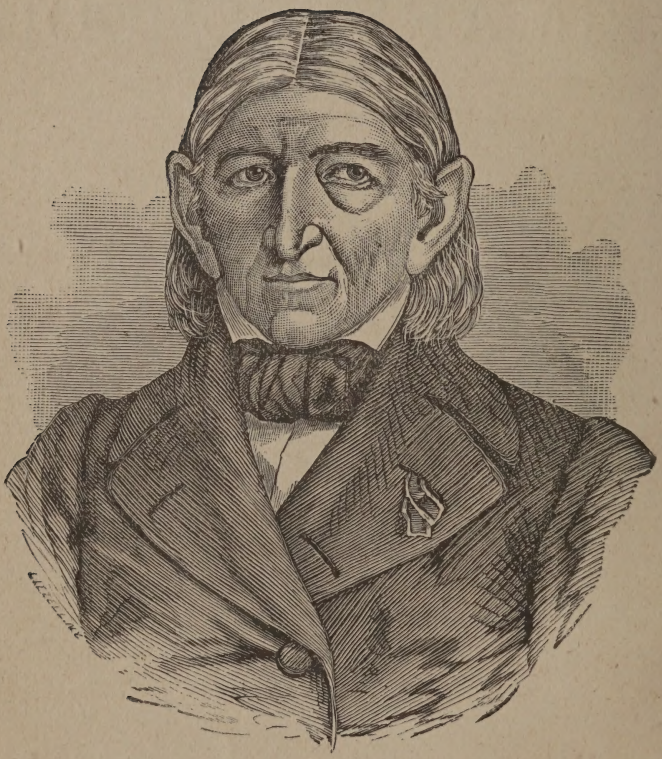

Kommt, lasst uns den Kindern leben!

FRIEDRICH FROEBEL.

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PREFACE.

We most earnestly and respectfully beg of the generous and benevolent members of our community the perusal of the following pages. The subject herein treated is of acknowledged importance and pressing necessity, both in a philanthropic and economic point of view. It is replete with vital interest and touching pathos, and deserves the attention of all humane and public-spirited citizens. It needs only to be extensively known in order to be generously patronized and liberally assisted.

There is in New England a large number of blind children, between the ages of four and nine, for whose instruction and training there is no provision whatever; whereas, owing to the nature of their infirmity, and to the undesirableness of their surroundings, these afflicted members of the human family need more care and cultivation than all others. They are shrouded from the cradle in the ceaseless gloom that has settled down like a night upon them. They are oppressed by poverty, and threatened by degradation. They are doomed to an existence of ignorance and misguided indulgence. They parch and pine within a short distance of a benevolence known all over the civilized world.

As the golden crocuses turn up their heads in spring-time, begging the sun to draw them out from their dark chambers into glorious light and air, so these sightless waifs stretch their hands towards the friends of humanity, imploring them to rescue them from the grasp of misery and the horrors of pauperism, and to open to them a path of usefulness and happiness. At this period of their lives the whole atmosphere is full of promise and hope. Noxious plants have scarcely had time to grow and poison the soil of their hearts. Later on, the clouds of failure may thicken in the horizon of activity, and efforts at

salvation may prove futile. Let us, then, take them up at the tenderest age, provide for them the best means of education, and surround them with the healthiest influences. Let us raise them from the mire of idleness and neglect, and bring them up properly. Let us kindle in them the aspiration for self-helpfulness, and the ambition for self-improvement and guidance, which is mightier than all other forces in the reformation of society. This sacred fire is oftenest lighted at the torch of early and systematic training. In it lies the secret of ultimate success.

For the deliverance of these little children, and the palliation of their physical disabilities, Froebel's kindergarten, with the genial warmth of kindness radiating from its principles, with its methodically arranged gifts and games, its cube-building, sewing, weaving, and modelling in clay, will be the best and most effective means. It will dispel the clouds of wretchedness, and foster the budding and blooming of dormant faculties and latent capabilities. It will place the first round of the ladder of education on a level with the tiny feet of the very smallest sightless children, so that they may "climb," as Sir Walter Raleigh said, without fearing to fall. It will lift them up from the slough of polluting misery in which they wallow, and enable them to step upon the platform of activity and happiness. Without it the whole system of instruction and training of blind persons is imperfect. It lacks a life-giving principle.

The supreme value of the project is fully discussed and clearly shown in the following pages. The necessity for immediate and vigorous action for carrying it out is too obvious to require any further argument, and we herewith renew the appeal to the public for a permanent fund of $250,000.

Fellow-citizens, will you not aid us to assist the blind to help themselves?

The salvation of little sightless children is in the hands of the rich and the benevolent. May we prophesy for them the dawn of a day all the more radiant for the darkness of the night that has preceded it?

M. ANAGNOS.

THE APPEAL FOR A KINDERGARTEN.

[Extract from the Fifty-second Annual Report of the Trustees.]

At the commencement festival of the Perkins Institution, held at Tremont Temple on the 5th of June last, the kindergarten exercises were made a special feature, and the greatest interest centred about them. Dr. W. T. Harris of Concord made an excellent address, in which he spoke earnestly of the peculiar significance and value of Froebel's system; and his remarks were heartily applauded.

A brief circular, printed in raised characters, and distributed extensively among the audience, called attention to the need of money to establish a primary school for the many little sightless children who are now, at the tenderest and most impressionable age, either neglected or being perverted in a vicious atmosphere. We quote as follows: —

"With all the progress and advancement, our system of education for the blind is not yet complete. A vital element is still lacking for its perfection.

"There is in New England a large number of blind children between the ages of five and nine, who are too young to be received in a mixed school like ours. They live and move in a

very unhealthy atmosphere. Their minds are contaminated by low influences, and their growth is stinted by confinement in ill-ventilated and comfortless quarters. They waste away under the rust of neglect, and the want of sufficient food and proper care.

"Humanity, justice, expediency, and imperative duty, all alike demand that immediate and vigorous measures should be taken for the establishment and endowment of such a school as will be, not only an auxiliary, but a complement, to our institution."

The force of this call was increased tenfold by the exquisite work of the little boys and girls of the kindergarten classes. They demonstrated in a most practical and convincing manner the great promise and possibilities of this fruitful branch of education, and pleaded eloquently and fervently by the deftness of their fingers the cause of their smaller brothers and sisters in misfortune, for whose early instruction and training there is no provision whatever.

The number of self-supporting and independent blind men and women will increase in proportion to the efficiency and thoroughness of this early training, and beggary and the sum of human suffering will diminish correspondingly.

Such is the scope and character of this new enterprise. The favor with which its announcement has been received by the leading newspapers of New England is already a powerful encouragement, and we trust that the community will be disposed to give it the support which it merits. It is hard to conceive of a more practical or less objectionable form of beneficence. It is based upon sound principles, and

aims at great results. May it commend itself to the reason as well as the hearts of those to whom much has been given, and who wish so to employ their trust as to make it produce the greatest good in the present and in the future!

FRANCIS BROOKS,
JOHN S. DWIGHT,
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EDWARD N. PERKINS,
JOHN C. PHILLIPS,
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GEORGE W. WALES,
JOHN H. WETHERBEE,

Trustees.

GIVE US A KINDERGARTEN!

[Reprinted from the Fifty-second Annual Report of the Director.]

"Children are God's apostles, day by day
Sent forth to preach of love and hope and peace."

LOWELL.

IT has been previously stated in these reports, that much as has already been done for the amelioration of the social and moral condition of the blind, the system of their education is not as yet complete. A vital element is still wanting for its perfection. The soil in which its first roots are planted still needs to be tilled and carefully prepared. There is no present provision for the instruction and training of little sightless children between the ages of four and nine. If they remain at home, they seem doomed to idleness and inertia, left to bask in the sun in summer, and to hang over the fire in winter; passing through the tenderest period of their life without any discipline or direction. The early practice of Dr. Howe of receiving them under the roof of the institution, and bringing them up with older youth, has been necessarily discontinued by the rapid growth of the school. There is scarcely room enough in it now for the development of its own legitimate plans, and

the full growth of its departments. Hence, the organization of a separate establishment devoted to the education of the smallest blind children is not a mere desideratum: it is a grand want, and an imperative necessity.

To secure this, the most valuable, although the lowest, round in the ladder of our system of instruction and training, an earnest and energetic appeal was made a year ago to the public for the foundation and endowment of a kindergarten; and the lapse of time only makes the project seem more important and indispensable.

Whenever we reflect, that whatever good or ill we see in the active world around us was cultivated in the nurseries of a generation ago, we can scarcely exaggerate the importance of a little child. In him is folded up, as it were, the hope of posterity, just as the future pride of the forest is enclosed in a tiny acorn. As Richter says, "The clew of our destiny, wander where we will, lies at the cradle-foot." But the little creature, the incipient man or woman, is in our power. The opening intellect, the budding feelings and capacities, and the dawning conscience, are committed to our care; and the child, in all his vast relations, will largely be just what we make him. We hold in our hand the seal with which the soft, ductile, impressionable wax of infant character is to be moulded.

Educated our children must be, whether we will or not. Whether we think of it or not, we are forming them every day. By our speech and by our

silence, by our looks and by the tones of our voice, by our habits and peculiarities, by our conversation with each other, by our companions, by every incident which our little ones witness, they are swiftly and surely trained to what they will be hereafter.

It is of vast importance, therefore, to adopt the right principles of education for all children as soon as they begin to notice things around them, and to protect them by watchful care and parental solicitude from all moral infections at the time when lasting impressions are made, either for good or for evil, and when character is first taking form. But this necessity is immeasurably greater in the case of those among them upon whom the hand of affliction and misery is heavily laid, and to whom no day of hopefulness returns with the seasons of the year.

It is beyond doubt, that the souls of these tiny human beings have in them something of that cloud of glory of which the poet sings. No matter how hideous and unclean their lives may be, they have susceptibilities that can be touched by the magic wand of kindness and beauty. They have hearts which can be reached by the radiance of love and sympathy. Like all other children, they are blessed with the germs of mental faculties, natural aptitudes and moral excellences, which can be fostered by culture, and brought to fruition by training. But born for the most part in the folds of misery and vice, and the by-ways of ignorance and depravity, and cut off in so great a degree from communion with the external world, they are the prisoners of wretchedness,

and the stricken lambs of the human flock. The enjoyments of childhood, the pleasures of life, and the comforts of home, are utterly unknown to them. Not a glimmer of gladness enters the dark chamber of their isolation, not a breath of happiness lightens the heavy pressure of the iron veil of their calamity. There is no affectionate sympathy enveloping them in its ample mantle of charity, until, with love's searching lens, some saving germs can be found and nourished. Their environment is pregnant with pernicious influences, which stunt their natural growth, and produce such physical peculiarities, intellectual distortions, and moral deformities, as no amount of skilful training in later years can eradicate. Thrust out of sight in ill-ventilated and unhealthy quarters, or crowded into the street, abandoned to negligence and rust, or kicked and cuffed and driven about, these unfortunate children tread with weary feet and wasted strength their thorn-strewn path of early life through the midst of indigence and distress, want and privation, sorrow and suffering. The bread they eat, the air they breathe, and the talk they hear, are all either injurious to their health, or poisonous to their character. The foxes in their holes, the birds in their nests, and the insects in their habitations, have far better care and guidance than these little human forms. When I think of the dens in which most of them are housed, and of the squalid dwellings in which they are herded, without furniture, without clothing save a few rags for decency, and with a very limited quantity of unwholesome food,

sufficing only to maintain a dwarfed existence, — and compare them with the homes of the rich, with satin and velvet for their soft seats, and costly, warm carpets and hangings, and wasteful profusion of luxuries, and fires and bright lights, with books and pictures and perfumes, and pure air and spring-water and cleanliness, and all that the others lack, — oh! I cannot but wonder at the magnitude of the inequality; and I feel compelled to raise my feeble voice, and, in the name of humanity and eternal justice, to ask a fair and prompt cure for some of its most striking features at least.

The remedy of this palpable injustice, and the salvation and future welfare of these children, who, in the words of Richter, unfortunate as they may be, are "nearest to the throne of glory, as the smallest planets are most approximate to the sun," are to be found exclusively in the immediate provision of means and measures for their early care and systematic training. They should be speedily removed from their surroundings, and placed under the most genial influences and thorough cultivation. It is by this means that the seeds of good qualities in them are to be vivified, and germinate before the ground is given to weeds and tares. It is this that will prevent their humble talent from being buried in the depths of helplessness, or becoming rotten in the marshes of abuse or in the morasses of indulgence. It is this, more than any thing else, that will kindle in them that sacred spark which illumines life with beauty, and lights the flame on every altar where

man sacrifices his baser instincts to lofty ideals. It is this alone that will develop and strengthen the wings of dignity and self-respect, so as to enable them to out-soar the enduring darkness of affliction and the distressing atmosphere of pauperism. Energetic husbandry in the spring brings good fruition in the autumn. We can hardly expect to see a perfect tree if we let the twig get warped and twisted at the outset. By raising these little waifs from a state of sloth and torpor to one of comfort and diligence, by teaching them by precept and example to love truth, and uprightness of conduct, and to hate falsehood and deception, and by instructing them in habits of industry and cleanliness, we shall engender in them a spirit of self-reliance and independence, and a feeling of respect for others, lay the foundations of sterling manhood and womanhood, and turn the whole current of their lives in the right direction. The blind persons whom we see occasionally in the streets of our large cities, with a placard on the breast heralding their misfortune, and with a forlorn little dog for a guide, deeply touch the hearts of the passers-by; and the pennies drop into the basket held in the poodle's mouth at no slow and niggard rate. But at the same time their presence reflects very unfavorably upon the wisdom of our social economy, and attaches a disgrace to our civilization; and I know of no measure which will help more effectually to erase these blots, and create a new era of advancement and happiness, than careful education and thorough training during the first four or five years of the lives of these

infants, which are now either wasted, or, what is worse than this, given to the devil and his ministers.

The difference between the neglected and the educated sightless child is almost incredibly great. While the former wends his way through life like an unkempt creature, the latter, gladdened by the genial warmth of knowledge, and fitted for the discharge of duty and general usefulness, takes his station as a member of the human family, contributes his share to the common weal, and enjoys the privileges and fulfils the obligations of citizenship, thus forming an integral part of society. The crowning of all these inestimable advantages is, that the clouds of night folded round him no longer render his existence unhappy. For a cultivated mind is not dark and gloomy because the light of the sun and of the stars is shut out from it; but, like the fabled cavern, it glows with the gems which adorn it within.

For the accomplishment of this grand end, and the attainment of such valuable results in the largest possible number of cases, a primary school for little sightless children should be at once established. As there is not room for it on the premises of this institution, and as, moreover, it is not desirable on many accounts to locate it here, it should be placed in Dorchester, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, or elsewhere within three or four miles of the state house. It should occupy a lot of high and well-drained land, in a healthy and pleasant situation, comprising five acres at least. It should be organized on sound, progressive principles, and controlled by a board of trustees consisting of

the most disinterested and public-spirited citizens of Boston. Its aims and purposes should be clearly defined; and there should be nothing eleëmosynary, either in its title, charter, rules or regulations, which might compromise its educational character. Its permanent existence and entire independence of political or sectarian influences should be secured and guaranteed by an endowment fund of $250,000; and its doors should be wide open to all little sightless children of whatever station and condition, and to a limited number of seeing ones, who would serve as their associates, playmates, and companions. They should be kept until the age of twelve, and taught and trained objectively, according to the rational and philosophic methods developed in Froebel's kindergarten.

This system is admirably suited for the instruction of blind infants, containing, as it does, within itself the power of awakening an inner force compelling them to manliness and righteousness, and of counteracting morbid feelings and peculiarities flowing from the loss of sight. It is founded on the broad principle, that the highest type of humanity which education can produce is to be attained by the equal and simultaneous development of every faculty. It provides for the nourishment of each root of the character in its earliest stage, on the ground that all are indispensable to a noble and perfect growth. It seeks to create in the child whatever tends to unify him in every direction of his evolution. Unity is the fundamental thought which pervades the system. It is

the main stay of the whole structure. Every thing rests on it, proceeds from it, strives for it, leads and returns to it. The real difference between the kindergarten and the ordinary schoolroom is in the spirit, not in the methods. In the one, the order is made and the work mostly done by the pupils themselves; in the other, by the teachers. Froebel does not treat children as parrots, who are to be made to perform certain tasks and to acquire such and such tricks, but views them as creatures of infinite capacity for doing and learning, whose own instincts and desires must be turned towards the things that we deem desirable. The standard of this system is not one of attainment for a given age, but of the full and perfect development of humanity. Its games, while they doubtless are a source of amusement to the children in school, are also the tools, so to speak, to aid the teacher in her labors. Attention, accuracy, quickness of invention, a sense of harmony, fertility of imagination, the love of construction, and the first principles of reasoning, are taught by means of the gifts or simple toys; while nicety and dexterity of handling, and pleasure in active exertion, are promoted by every exercise. The peculiarity of the kindergarten is, that the play is invariably turned to a useful account. Through its instrumentality slumbering faculties are to be aroused, drowsy inclinations to be enlivened, and the power of reflection cultivated. In this system there is no end of learning, no acme of perfection. Moreover, Froebel is never weary of repeating that man must not only *know*, but

produce; not only *think*, but *do;* and that the capacity for work must be fostered in early life, side by side with the faculty of observation and comprehension, before the memory is burdened with words and symbols.

These habits, valuable as they may be, are only a part of the choice fruits of the kindergarten. Nor is the training thereby obtained directed solely, or even principally, to the mind. It takes the child's whole nature, aiding its expansion physically and morally, as well as intellectually. The rhythmical movement, the marching and singing, the play and the merriment, all contribute to health. They improve the senses, increase the muscular strength, and make the limbs supple and the heart cheery.

Moral culture is also carried on through the habit of strict obedience under a gentle law. Froebel appeals to the higher nature of little human beings, to their generosity, their sense of right, their devotion to truth, their appreciation of goodness and self-sacrifice, in the most effective and practical manner. The ordinary dogmatic method pursued in the common schools is far inferior to his. The one orders conduct, the other cultivates motives. The one teaches catechisms to little children: the other sharpens their mental vision to see beauty and goodness, and leads the soul heavenward. The one uses habit — the great power of education — as an outward restraint, the other as an inward regulator. The one disapproves of a lie as much as the other; but the latter brings intellectual tendencies and associations

to aid the moral precepts, and makes clearness and precision so essential to the pupil's daily enjoyment of his occupations and diversions, that all the channels to untruth, such as exaggeration, confusedness of mind, and incorrectness of speech, are cut off. So far as the child's horizon extends, he perceives distinctly and speaks plainly; and this atmosphere of intellectual veracity in which he lives is promotive of the growth of moral rectitude.

The average intelligence and mental activity of children taught in the kindergarten are infinitely superior to that of pupils who enter primary schools without such training. The former are more or less accustomed to exert themselves in the search for information, and prepared to advance more surely and steadily than the latter. They generally perceive things accurately, seize ideas rapidly and definitely, illustrate readily, work independently, and express their thoughts with correctness and fluency. To persons bereft of sight, Froebel's system promises even higher and richer results than these. It affords them unequalled facilities for gaining an adequate conception of forms of various kinds, and rare opportunities for the practice and refinement of their remaining senses, especially that of touch, which is their chief reliance for the acquisition of all concrete knowledge, and consequently the most important factor of their education. Above all, and with infinitely greater force than all, the drill obtained through its exercises so early in life, under such genial influences, will save many a blind child from dwindling and

becoming dwarfed, and will prove a valuable auxiliary for future achievements. It will help to raise the standard of attainments in this school to a higher plane, to enlarge its curriculum so as to include the study of sciences and languages, and to increase and extend still more widely the sphere of its general usefulness. A great part of the time which is now necessarily spent in mere primary routine work and elementary training, can then be devoted to the pursuit of advanced studies, both in the literary and musical departments, and to a thorough preparation for a professional or other calling. Moreover, the path up the steep hill of knowledge will start from the lowest point, and be a continuous one to its summit. There will be no chasms for the tender feet to leap, no precipices for them to scale. Thus there will be a positive and most significant gain at both ends, which will in some measure pave the way for the solution of the great problem of the higher education for the blind, and their thorough equipment for the struggle of existence.

So far as our pupils are concerned, the great and lasting benefits of the kindergarten system are not imaginary. Nor do they rest upon mere speculation or *à priori* reasoning. They are real, substantial, tangible, gathered in the field of experience, and confirmed by the test of time. Froebel's wonderful methods have been introduced and practised in our school for the last three years, and their results have been truly marvellous. Children whose faculties had been weakened and enervated by unwise indulgence,

or benumbed by the frost of privation, and who, sinking gradually into sluggishness and feeble-mindedness, were averse even to locomotion, and unable to do any thing elsewhere, have made remarkable advancement under its influence. Boys and girls who seemed entirely helpless, and had no command whatever of their hands, have been roused to energy and activity by its agency. Through the simple but lively and attractive occupations of sewing, stick-laying, weaving, cube-building, modelling in clay, and the like, they have acquired a great degree of muscular elasticity and manual dexterity, which is of infinite assistance to them in deciphering the embossed print easily, in writing their letters skilfully, in tracing on the maps with alacrity, in examining objects intelligently, in stringing beads promptly, in using their needles deftly, in tying the strings of their shoes neatly, and, moreover, in doing readily a number of other things which they would have felt unable to undertake without this training.

These effects are succinctly but graphically described in the October number of the "Wide Awake" by Miss Emilie Poulsson, a graduate of our school, and a teacher of broad culture and uncommon talent. Her excellent account of the "blind children's kindergarten," beautifully illustrated by the artistic hand of Miss L. B. Humphrey, and teeming with points in which the necessary faculty of judicious criticism is tempered by sympathetic feeling and keen insight, blended with unfailing discrimination, is so interesting and so exhaustive, that I take great pleasure in

reprinting it herewith, by the kind and courteous permission of Messrs. D. Lothrop & Co., publishers of the magazine.

Those of our pupils who have tasted the fruits of the kindergarten, and have learned to appreciate their value and importance, have become so infatuated with it, that they are most eager to secure its blessings permanently for their smaller brothers and sisters in misfortune. To this end they labor incessantly, unswervingly, enthusiastically. As the sudden termination of the last school session thwarted the plans and preparations of our girls for giving a concert in one of the neighboring towns at their own risk for the benefit of this enterprise, they have determined to make up the loss in various other ways. The members of the third class especially, who furnished most of the incidents related in Miss Poulsson's article, have shown an exemplary perseverance and touching devotion in this direction. One of them, Fanny E. Jackson of Bridgewater, twelve years of age, raised $5.30 for the "blind children's kindergarten," by taking care of a baby and washing dishes during the summer vacation. Another, Mary Callahan of Palmer, earned a smaller sum by scrubbing floors and making wool mats. A third, Mary Meleady of East Boston, sewed pieces for a bedquilt, thereby earning one dollar for the same purpose. Several others have endeavored to help the cause to the best of their ability, and have raised money to contribute to its furtherance, either by taking care of infants, and cleaning kitchen and table utensils, or by bringing

the matter to the notice of their neighbors, and soliciting subscriptions from their friends and acquaintances. The most striking feature of this juvenile movement was its spontaneity, and the enthusiasm of the little workers. To be sure, the amount of money raised through their exertions is small, very small indeed, — only $11.55; but the earnestness of their efforts is full of pathos and significance. It tells the whole story so eloquently and persuasively, that in its light all mere arguments in favor of the project seem pale and flat by comparison. Moreover, it shows to those who roll in the abundance of riches, that "sweet mercy is nobility's true badge."

> "Who does the best his circumstance allows,
> Does well, acts nobly: angels could no more."

May the small sum raised in the spirit of true love and self-denial be like leaven to the generous contributions of the wealthy, and render them the bread of life for hungering humanity!

In view of these facts, and in consideration of the beneficent and far-reaching aspects of the plan, it will easily be seen that a well-fitted and sufficiently endowed kindergarten will be to little sightless children what the light of the sun and the dew of heaven are to tender plants, — a source of life and growth and power, a flame dispelling the clouds of darkness, a fountain of happiness and strength, a radiant centre of illuminating force, helping them to out-soar the shadows of their night. It will prove an armory from which they will draw the most effective weapons

to fight the battle of life successfully. It will be a psalm of their deliverance from the clutches of misery, a hymn to the dawn of an era of freedom and independence, a benediction on the benevolence of our age. To those who aid it to spring into being, such an institution will be a monument of enduring fame, reaching to the stars, yea, to the great white throne itself, studded on all sides with the gems of the lives of honorable men and women saved from the stagnant pools of vice by a kind hand reached out in season.

Scores of little children are now virtually waiting to partake of the benefits of such an establishment. They are famishing for the intellectual and moral food which it promises to supply to them. Plunged in a sea of ills, they stretch their helpless hands towards the shore, calling for a life-boat; and I almost seem to hear them speak in the language of the poet, and say, in mournful accents of supplication, —

"Save us! save us! woe surrounds us;
Little knowledge sore confounds us;
Life is but a lingering death.

"Give us light amid our darkness;
Let us know the good from ill;
Hate us not for all our blindness;
Love us, lead us, show us kindness;
You can make us what you will.

"We are willing, we are ready;
We would learn if you would teach;
We have hearts that yearn towards duty;
We have minds alive to beauty,
Souls that any heights can reach."

Who that hath a heart not palsied by selfishness can resist such an entreaty? Who can turn a deaf ear to so piteous and pathetic a call? Think of this imperative need, ye friends of humanity, and then say how much longer it shall be permitted to exist! Reflect upon the sufferings of these poor blind waifs, ye fathers and mothers, and then, gathering your darlings to your bosoms, rejoice that they do not go down darkling to the grave; and that they have the pure wheat and the sweet waters of life in plenitude. But at the same time remember, that the "faintest flaw in one of the links of circumstance, or an imperceptible turn or stoppage in the wheel of fortune," might leave your little ones homeless, sightless, speechless, or mere lumps of clay, without care and protection! These helpless children are in no manner to blame that they are blind. The fault is that of others, — perhaps is to be found in the very social fabric which pours gold into the coffers of the rich: the misfortune alone, and the consequent privations, alas! are theirs. But, be the cause where it may, are these poor infants to be allowed to run the cycle of their life under the crushing weight of their infirmity? Is it fair that a great blight should be permitted to settle down on their character, like a foul vapor, and prevent healthy growth? Is it just, is it human, that the current of their existence should be left to flow in a tumultuous course from the sunny fountain-head to the dark ocean? Are there no men and women in the folds of benevolence generous enough and willing to help in this work of pure phi-

lanthropy and reformation, thus bending their heads to receive the crown, in which will shine, like pearls and diamonds, the tears of joy and gratitude shed by those whom their munificence has saved and blessed?

This enterprise has already been considered in all quarters, and it seems to have gained friends everywhere. The preliminaries are now despatched, and the necessary preparations for active canvassing are nearly completed. The time for real work and for practical generosity and support has come. All the omens are favorable. But no great undertaking goes on its own feet. We have to furnish it with wings born of our earnestness, our fidelity, and our devotion. The fact that so much has recently been done for the blind in the way of embossing books may deter some of their best friends from urging their claims vigorously on the attention of the public. For myself, deeply grateful as I am for past favors, and much as I shrink from calling again upon the benevolent for aid, I deem it my solemn duty to do so promptly and without hesitation, notwithstanding the unpleasant features of the task. I feel the sting of the neglect endured by suffering humanity piercing my soul, and I cannot be lukewarm any longer. I have cheerfully, gladly, deliberately, and unequivocally accepted Froebel's grand call to "live for little children," and have determined to devote whatever powers I may possess heartily and disinterestedly to the amelioration of their condition. My own experience in early childhood brings their woes nearer to my heart; and every cry for bread or raiment, for shelter or educa-

tion, finds a responsive chord in it. My desire to help them is so sincere and warm, that I am prepared to put aside all personal considerations and convenience in order to carry it out. Here or elsewhere, under the auspices of your organization or those of a new one, with others or alone, I am determined to labor for them with the zeal of a true friend and the enthusiasm of a believer in their cause. This is not a statement made at random, or on the spur of impulse. It is a resolve formed from a profound sense of duty. It is a conviction made strong and permanent by the actual observation of so much misery and wickedness. It is a decision produced by the careful study of the effects of blindness and of the means for their alleviation. This project is uppermost in all my thoughts, feelings, actions, and aspirations. "Bating not a jot of heart or hope," I must work, in season and out of season, until it is accomplished. Perplexed as I often am by its difficulties, now urged forward, now discouraged and held back, always striving after success, wearied and hampered by various obstacles, the only pleasure that never fails me is the faith that a kindergarten for sightless children will ere long be founded and endowed. The consummation of this noble enterprise will be the realization of the sweetest dream that I may have beneath the skies.

M. ANAGNOS.

THE BLIND CHILDREN'S KINDERGARTEN.

BY EMILIE POULSSON.

[Reprinted from the October number of the WIDE AWAKE by kind permission of Messrs. D. Lothrop & Co., publishers of the magazine.]

Do you remember the article about the Perkins Institution for the Blind, in the "Wide Awake" for March, 1878, — that noble supplementary public school for those brothers and sisters of yours over whose eyes a heavy hand has been mysteriously laid? Since that account was written, a kindergarten experiment has been tried; and it promises to be the best "happy thought" yet for the benefit of blind children. It really seems that knowledge and usefulness and self-reliance were to be reached by a blind person some years sooner by way of the kindergarten than by any of the slow, slow progresses over the long, long roads of other years.

To be sure, object-teaching had been used in the school. The botany class had its vegetable garden; there had been weighing and measuring, buying and selling, in the arithmetic classes; the physiology class had fine anatomical models; and there were stuffed birds and other animals for the student in natural history, to say nothing of the orders given to the wondering Peter for lobsters, clams, heart and lungs of an ox, the bones of fowls, and many like objects.

Seeing that what was touched was comprehended far more completely and quickly than what was described by voice, Mr. Anagnos, after much careful study of the kindergarten, resolved to introduce it into the school; resolved to teach great boys and girls just as baby-folks are taught; resolved, if he succeeded as he expected, to give the world no peace until a great, noble kindergarten should be built and endowed, that would take in all the blind baby-folks at the outset, just as soon as they came to true kindergarten age, so that they might begin to learn at the time of life when other children begin.

He started with two classes, — one in the boys' school, and one in the girls'. Both classes are composed mostly of the pupils of the lowest grade. But he also brings in for a time those in the higher classes who are conspicuously lacking in dexterity, or whose conceptions of form are unusually vague and confused.

The idea that a blind person is ever without a marvellously delicate touch will be new to many people: but the truth is, that the sensitive touch, instead of being a compensatory gift, has been the result of harder work than you or I know any thing about, — the most patient, long-continued effort to see and think and imagine and remember with the fingers.

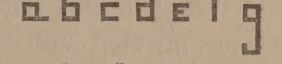
Mr. Anagnos finds kindergarten work to be his most valuable means in the cultivation of this sensitiveness of the fingers, and he would esteem it indispensable in the institution for this result alone. But, besides this, there seems no way so effective of affording a systematic study of form. It is the true A B C in the education of the blind.

The geometrical training which any child gets in the kindergarten helps the blind wonderfully to definitely imagine objects which they cannot handle.

The little girls who have taken up geography after their

kindergarten training are far readier in their map-work than previous classes. They are very quick to notice peculiarities in the shape of the states and countries, and they listen to descriptions most understandingly.

"Reading by touch," too, is far easier to the fingers which have been trained in tracing the embroidered patterns on the sewing-cards, weaving the delicate papers, and modelling in clay. The work of square handwriting is taken up with great delight and courage by pupils who already know lines and angles well through the stick-laying and sewing. The Braille point-writing (a system of raised dots, and used because it can be read by touch) and the written arithmetic of the blind (which is done with type placed in different positions to represent the different figures), both require the clearness concerning "upper right," "lower right," "upper left," and "lower left," which is constantly cultivated by the kindergarten work with cubes, planes, and sticks. The teacher of the girls' work-school, under whom the girls learn hand-sewing, machine-sewing, knitting, crocheting, hammock-making, and cane-seating, speaks heartily in praise of kindergarten as a preparatory training. So it is in music: the awakened mind and flexile hand, with muscles already trained in the kindergarten to obey, tell at once in the progress of the pupil.



THE "A B C" OF THE BLIND.

The youngest children in these two classes are ten years of age; the majority older. But they are found to need the same development and the same simple lesson as ordinary children from three to six years of age, — not because of any natural mental lack, but because the aimless, neglected lives they have led before coming to the institution have kept them dull and unawake. The little blind child, following its natural instinct of play, gets hurt so often, that it soon feels it safest to curl up in a corner, and

keep still. If it try to play games with active, seeing children, it finds itself in the way; and in the way still when there is work to do, — it is naturally shoved to one side. Play, work, conversation, pass it by: growth stops, or goes on slowly and weakly.

By and by, perhaps, some one takes the necessary steps, and sends the big girl or boy to the school for the blind. And, until the establishment of these classes, there has been no kindergarten into which to receive this big, clumsy infant. One girl said to me, piteously, "When I was at home, my step-mother used always to be a-scolding to me and my father, about my being blind, and not being able to work in the factory like the others, and I not doing the housework either. But nobody showed me how to do any thing till I came here. How could I do things?" The same girl has since written to an aunt, who, she says, was always "feeling bad" because of her blindness: "I don't mind it now, being blind; because I can go all around, and I can sew, and wash dishes, and have my lessons, and do just like other people."

But it is not always unkindness which leaves the poor things so untrained. Some suffer from the unwise tenderness which has led their friends to wait upon them always. A girl of twenty, who came to the institution, could scarcely pin her collars, and preferred to have some one put her gloves and shawl on for her. The kindergarten has done much for her already in giving her hands their normal *handiness*.

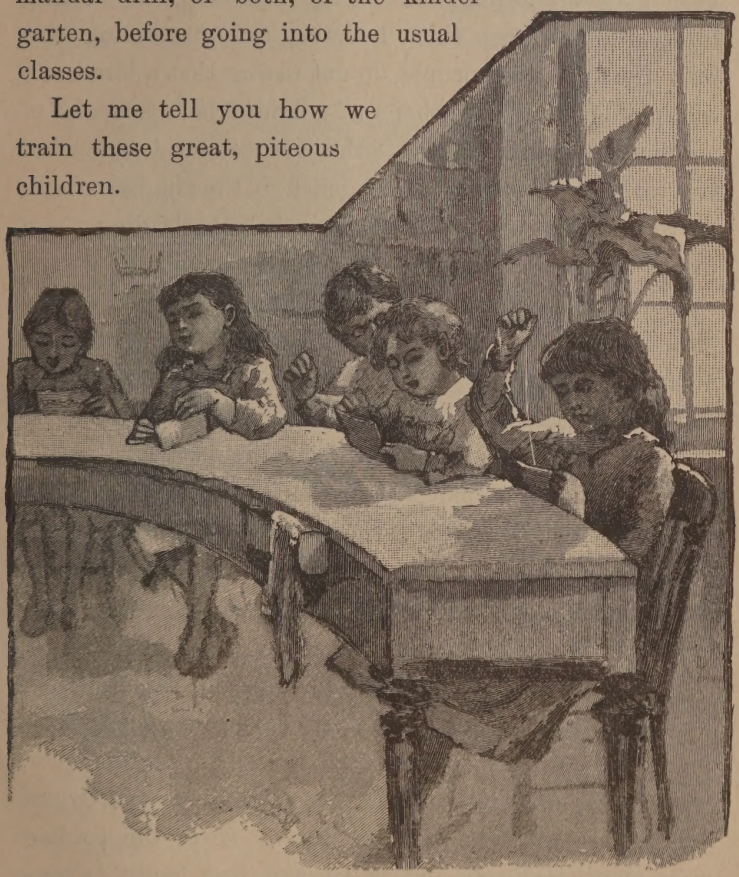
"What did you do at home, Sarah?" I asked another girl one day.

"Look at me," she replied: "do you see the way I am sitting?" She had her hands folded in her lap, her whole attitude as listless as possible. "That is what I used to do all day long."

Such are many of the girls in our kindergarten, —

grown-up, but as little children in their use of both muscle and mind; others have been more fortunate in home circumstances and training; and many are winsome and dear and interesting; but all need either the mental or manual drill, or both, of the kindergarten, before going into the usual classes.

Let me tell you how we train these great, piteous children.



ON SEWING-DAY.

Monday is sewing-day, — they scarcely have any other names for days than "clay-day," "weaving-day," "cushion-day," etc., — not for hemming, over-handing, basting, and stitching, — these come in the afternoon work-school, — but the embroidering of white cards with worsteds in patterns. The cards being pricked, the girls can feel the

holes easily for working; and, by tracing the worsted lines when completed, they "see just how it looks." *They observe* with their fingers and their imaginations.

Among the outlines, that of a house is a favorite with both teacher and pupils. It brings up enough interesting information to keep them listening and questioning for a long time. Seeing-people do not realize that a blind person may not know the shape of a house-roof, the color of a chimney, and hundreds of other every-day things beyond the reach of investigating fingers; so the suggestiveness of the sewing-cards is a valuable help in leading these pupils to a correct knowledge of things about them.

Tuesday is "cushion-day." The girls come to the pleasant east room, where there are plants and sunshine enough to satisfy any kindergartener, and a knowing little canary besides, and gather around the horseshoe table.

On it are red and gray cushions, each with a plentiful supply of tiny doll-hairpins in the upper right-hand corner. When stick-laying is the work, the girls soon have on their cushions a fine array of lines, squares, triangles, ladders, chairs, and here and there a bird-house, or other fancy figure. They fasten the sticks down carefully at each end with a hairpin, and thus have the same satisfaction as in card-sewing, — that of examining their work themselves. Their imagination seems to awake. One worker sees four tall soldiers marching in a row, where you notice only four vertical lines. After the soldiers were mentioned, some one suggested they ought to have tents. These they were sure they could make, as they had had a little descriptive talk about tents only a few days before; so they went to work.

Most of the class considered a triangle a satisfactory representation, and soon pronounced the tents ready.

Mary was busy longer with hers. She had made a square for the floor, and then put a pole up from each

corner, letting the four meet; thus forming the framework of as cunning a little tent as you could imagine.

Belle had a flag on hers, the sticks that outlined it slanting enough to give it a graceful droop. Abbie, too, had a flag, but, not having thought to make it droop, explained its extremely stiff appearance by saying that

ON CUSHION-DAY.

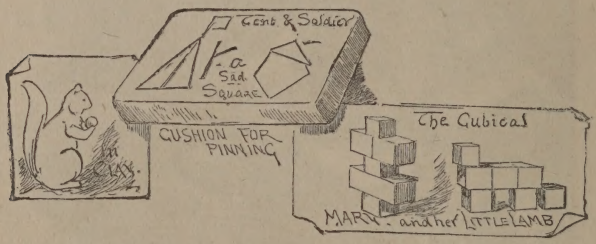
there was a "strong wind blowing from the north-west." Another put a sentry by the tent, and another gave her soldiers guns; and so they kept on till the bell struck.

The cushions are also used for the work with tablets. These are inch squares of wood, red on one side, white on the other: and for blind children's use they have holes drilled in them, so that they may be fastened on the cushion with a pin; and also a tiny notch on the edge of the red side, so that they may know what color they have uppermost. They delight to make red and white patchwork in this way.

They also have triangular pieces drilled and notched in the same way. Their first work with these is to combine them into squares. This was easy for most of them; but

one girl exclaimed, after painstaking efforts, "Well, I seem to have made a very sad square somehow!"

It was indeed a funny-looking, irregular figure, with several sides and corners pointing in every direction. A little talk about the sides and corners of a true square showed Minnie what caused the "sadness;" and she soon showed us a very cheerful square indeed, with a correspondingly cheerful look on her face. This is valuable



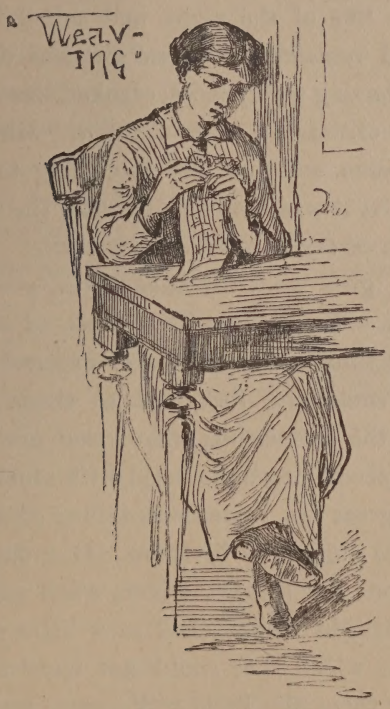
SOME OF THEIR HANDIWORK.

training for the work-schools in which they learn trades for future support.

Weaving with colored papers is the Wednesday work, and I think it ranks next the clay in their affections. You can get a little idea of how bewildering it is to do this weaving if you should try it some time in the dark, trusting only to your finger-tips. Under and over, under and over, patiently and carefully, the big blind pupils work. Wee Katie calls her papers men walking under and over the bridges; and another says, "They are men who do not know the way, and we have to lead them aright." This work, like the card-sewing and the little tablets, brings out the girls' delight in colors. It seems strange that they should like so much what they can have no conception of.

They have decided preferences in color: and the choosing of a new paper mat, and the color of the strands to weave in it, is a work of just as much interest to them as

to seeing-children; and the guidance which their taste receives in this way, the lessons in combinations, and the little talks about the appropriateness of certain colors to certain articles and uses, must help them to a somewhat clearer appreciation of the beauty and effectiveness of color.



"AS A LITTLE CHILD"

Of all the occupations, the paper-weaving bears the most direct relation to future handiwork: for, besides the sewing and ordinary "womanly work," many of the girls learn cane-seating and basket-making; and in both the skill required in weaving will be of great service.

On Thursday they have cubes. The little boxes, containing eight tiny cubes, look rather insignificant; but wait till you have seen the fun that can be had with them, and the variety of things made with them. The class work

together for a while, following the teacher's directions, and succeed fairly, though this is their hardest work. All is so easily demolished by a touch in the wrong place; and that cannot always be avoided, as they must "see" the forms with their fingers. In their first days with cubes, when they were constructing the simplest forms, they made a line of the eight, and called it a "procession:" and I remember how one girl had displaced hers quite badly, having a very loose, crooked line indeed; and I was about to criticise it, when she said, "Mine is a democratic procession, and the men are going to fall out and go home." As it was the morning after the Garfield election, this was certainly not a clumsy turn.

When the girls work by themselves, — without directions, that is, — they invent forms just as other children do, imitating things about them, or expressing their conceptions of something described to them. The whole furniture of the gymnasium was copied one day by little Katie, each piece being announced with much enthusiasm.

We have great fun, sometimes, telling stories, and making the forms suggested by them. One day the teacher gave directions for a form, which, when completed, was hailed with delight by the class as a little girl. A form followed this which they could not name at first; but, when I told them the little girl's name was Mary, they recognized the "lamb" with great glee.

Left free to invent, they went on and made the schoolhouse, the teacher's desk and chair, and the other furniture of Mary's schoolroom in great variety. One made a horseshoe table like the one at which the class was sitting; one made a square table and four desks for the children, and one made an oblong table. Little May, who went to a public school a year ago, before she lost her sight, placed her children's desks far apart, with a broad aisle between them, "so they shouldn't whisper." Mary's home and

her lamb's would probably have been made, but there was no more time.

Another day they had the story of "The Three Bears." I gave them that most delightful version of it, for which all the children of the land have to thank Mrs. Clara Doty Bates and the "Wide Awake."

> "Silver Locks was a little girl,
> Lovely and good.
> She strayed out one day,
> And got lost in the wood,
> And was lonely and sad
> Till she came where there stood
> The house that belonged to the bears."

Of course, we made the house with a door that would open wide; and the big chair, and the middle-sized chair, and the wee baby bear's chair, which had to be broken all into pieces; and the big bed, and the middle-sized bed, and the wee baby bear's bed.

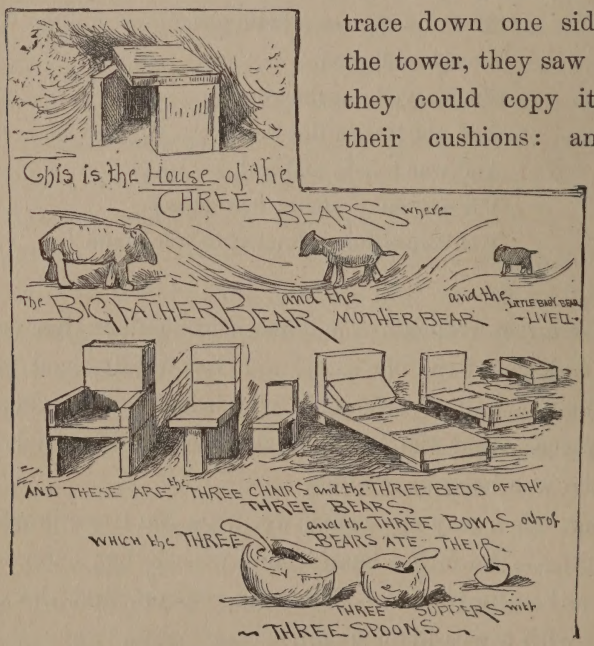
And, when clay-day came, we made the three bowls for the milk, — the father bear's bowl with a big ladle in it, the mother bear's bowl with a big spoon, and the baby bear's with a wee little spoon.

This was as far as I had thought of making forms to accompany the story: but several pairs of nimble hands finished the bowls, and made one or another of the bears; so that we had the whole family complete, as well as the house and furniture. "Silver Locks" was attempted, but was too far short of the darling ideal to be shown, even to me; though the intention and failure were confided.

Aside from what is gained in deftness, care, and precision, and development of the imagination, there are many lessons given in connection with the cubes; so that there is more than mere amusement in the towers, furni-

ture, steamboats, tents, candles, stairs, etc., that the pupils make.

To copy these forms with their square tablets, is what the girls call picture-making; and it is always done with the liveliest interest. They were first shown that one square was exactly like one face of the little cube; and then, letting their fingers trace down one side of the tower, they saw how they could copy it on their cushions: and I


This is the House of the
THREE BEARS where
The BIG FATHER BEAR and the
and the MOTHER BEAR
and the LITTLE BABY BEAR LIVED
AND THESE ARE the THREE CHAIRS and the THREE BEDS of the THREE BEARS
WHICH the THREE and the THREE BOWLS out of BEARS ATE THEIR
THREE SPOONS
THREE SUPPERS with

AN ILLUSTRATED STORY.

think no children enjoy drawing more than these children enjoy making pictures in this way. They get puzzled sometimes, in trying to observe only one side of a figure; as their fingers are apt to touch several sides, or even the whole at once: but they are gradually learning the meaning of "front view," "side view," etc.

It is certainly incomprehensible to blind people, that things can be represented naturally and accurately on a surface which presents only smoothness to their touch. But the square tablets give tangible surface-representa-

tions of the solid forms made with the cubes, and through this it is hoped that the children may gain a notion of real pictures.

I suppose every kindergarten has clay on Friday. That delight finishes the week with the Perkins Institute kindergarten children too. There is a joyous bustle as they put on the oversleeves to protect their dresses; and then they listen with beaming faces to the soft thuds which tell that a lump of clay is being put on each board, and try to make the most fanciful things with as much faith as when they undertake every-day forms. Fortunately for the girls, their teacher has the ready tact and imagination needed often to detect the ideal in the rude clay forms. Once, however, even she was at a loss. Little Polly, dear child, full of quaint fancies, had made a puzzling figure, which looked as if she had meant it for a tallow candle which had melted, and run down the sides. This guess was hazarded, but received with such surprise that it was hastily withdrawn, and the teacher begged for enlightenment; whereupon Polly explained, with much enthusiasm, that it was a "May-pole, wreathed with flowers." *She* could even tell which were the full-blown roses in the garlands, where we could only see ragged lumps of clay. One of the other girls had attempted a cream-pitcher; but, finding it a clumsy one, she put a bail on instead of a handle, and a little curved piece near the bottom to lift by; and there it stood, an unmistakable coal-hod!

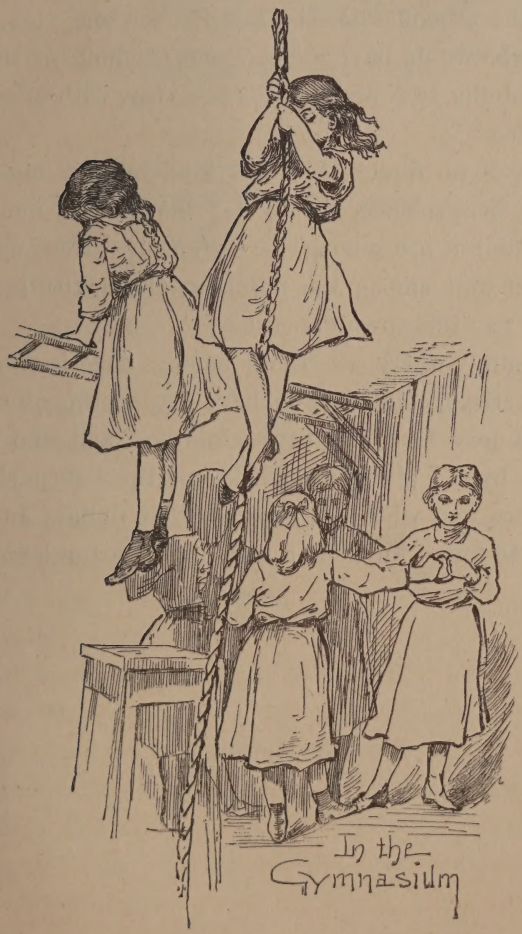
Having only one hour a day for kindergarten, we cannot use all its varied occupations in each week, so we choose those which seem most useful to our pupils; but such have been the results from this "hour," that Mr. Anagnos feels that all further pupils ought to be received directly into thorough kindergarten modes of instruction. Its importance seems a matter for universal consideration;

and we here commend the building and the endowment of kindergartens for the blind children of the nation, alike to the youth of the United States, and the wealthy philanthropists of our time and country. Into such homes, planned expressly for them, the little blind children now living in comfortless quarters, with but little or unwise care, could be gathered at the true kindergarten age: and there, with games and exercises prepared and adapted expressly for them to suit their needs, they would be guarded from hurt in their free frolickings; so that, instead of dreading, they would enjoy, motion, and be tempted into activity, and thus gain physical development, which so many blind people lack. Such children, by the time they reached the age of those now in the kindergarten class, would have the trained fingers, the active, disciplined mind, and the established character, which never belong to the blind youth whose early years are spent in idleness and depression.

The Perkins Institution as it now stands cannot furnish a kindergarten for these little folks. It is already a village in itself, with the main buildings, the cottages, schoolhouses, gallery, printing-house, and workshop. The land is too crowded with buildings, and the buildings with the older pupils, to afford room for any new department, for any such kindergarten and primary school for little blind children from five to ten years of age, as is now demanded; and there is absolutely no national, state, or private provision made for the instruction of the blind children under ten years of age. Mr. Anagnos has issued an earnest appeal for the foundation and endowment of such a department in his last annual report. From it we gather that the first thing to be done is to secure about five acres of land in a pleasant, healthy location. Making allowance for the buildings which will be needed sooner or later, five acres would be none too much for the out-

of-door life of the pupils, their gardens, playgrounds, and walks.

Then, they would need a house to live in; for, like the pupils at the institution, they would only go to their own



TEMPTED INTO ACTIVITY.

homes in the vacations. Schoolrooms, too, or a schoolhouse, would be demanded immediately, of course, and some big people to take care of the little people, — a matron to do the "mothering" and the housekeeping,

and others to help her, and two or three or four or more, kindergartnerin, — the best, wisest, and most loving of them that could be found.

Mr. Anagnos estimates the sum needed in such a beginning to be twenty-five thousand dollars, for the land, the house, the schoolhouse, the salaries, for one year, of the people who would have the care and teaching of the children, and the food and fuel for one year, with other plain necessities.

There is no doubt that this kindergarten must be a work of benevolence, for by far the greater number of blind children are among the very poor. Not more than eight per cent among the pupils at the institution could possibly pay their own expenses.

But surely there are those among American parents and American children who have the sentiment of Jean Paul, "I love God and little children," and who will be touched by the pitiable condition of these dear sightless little ones, and who will give of their dollars and their pennies to found for them a true kindergarten home.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

TO THE KINDERGARTEN FUND.

THE treasurer acknowledges the receipt of the following contributions: —

Mrs. E. B. Bigelow	$50 00
Mrs. J. H. Thorndike	100 00
Francis Minot, M.D.	100 00
Richard Sullivan	50 00
Mrs. B. L. Young	100 00
Mrs. Mary G. Burt	5 00
Miss Matilda and Miss Rebecca Goddard	50 00
Mrs. Sarah S. Fay	1,000 00
"No Name Club," Brookline, Mass.	30 00
S. G. Deblois	25 00
Mrs. P. C. Brooks (two donations)	600 00
Mrs. J. H. Wolcott	200 00
Miss Morton (through Mr. Thompson Baxter)	500 00
Abbott Lawrence Lowell	25 00
Mrs. J. B. S. Jackson	20 00
Estate of Moses Day	1,000 00
Miss Lucy H. Simonds	10 00
Rev. A. F. Washburn	10 00
Mrs. ——	5 00
Miss Clara B. Rogers	3 00
Edward A. Freeman	25
John Lart	25
A Friend	50

Two Friends	$2 00
Mrs. Dr. Freeman	1 00
F. Freeman	1 00
Walker Children	1 00
A Friend of the Good Cause	25 00

Further contributions and subscriptions are most earnestly solicited, and will be thankfully received and duly acknowledged by

EDWARD JACKSON, *Treasurer*,
No. 178 Devonshire street,
BOSTON, MASS.

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

THE little girls of the kindergarten department of the Perkins Institution for the Blind, at South Boston, sent to the director, Mr. Anagnos, a Christmas box of beautiful little articles made after the Froebelian system of gifts. The present was accompanied by a few lines neatly written by the little girls themselves, to which the following reply was made: —

SOUTH BOSTON, Dec. 25, 1882.

DEARLY BELOVED CHILDREN, — I have often thought that the twenty-first day of April, 1782, brought to childhood, with the birth of Froebel, a new era of activity and happiness, whose influence went forth to teach mankind a larger wisdom and a deeper love than it ever knew before. The gifts which you have been so kind as to prepare for me with your little fingers are, in their simplicity and prettiness, a striking confirmation of my thought; and I thank you heartily for them. I assure you, that if spirits hold jubilees, that of Froebel is in perfect glee whenever children like you illustrate by the work of their hands their own ability to think and do, and his love for humanity.

Your admirable success in Froebel's philosophical system of physical, mental, and moral training shows that a separate kindergarten for children much younger than yourselves is absolutely needed. An earnest appeal has already been made to the public for the foundation and endowment of such an institution.

May we not hope that the generous community which has so recently furnished you with a sufficient supply of embossed books will provide this inestimable boon for your little sisters and brothers in misfortune?

The liberality of the past is a sufficient guaranty of success in the future.

Believe me, dearest children, with renewed thanks for your thoughtful remembrance,

Your affectionate friend,

M. ANAGNOS.

To the little girls of the fourth and fifth classes.

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I GIVE and bequeath to the "Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind," in Boston, and their successors forever, the sum of $, to be paid by my executors out of my real and personal estate, when the same shall be payable, to the treasurer of the institution, for the time being, in trust, to be applied by the trustees thereof, and under their direction, to the endowment fund of a kindergarten and primary school for the blind.

Subscriptions and contributions are most earnestly solicited, and will be thankfully received by

EDWARD JACKSON, *Treasurer*,
No. 178 Devonshire Street,
BOSTON, MASS.